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REMARKS BY

U.S. AMBASSADOR DAN MOZENA AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE WORKSHOP ON RESEARCH TO INFORM FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

DHAKA, MAY 7 – U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena delivered the following remarks at the Inaugural Session of the Workshop on Research to Inform Food and Nutrition Security

(Begin Text)

Honorable Minister for Food and Disaster Management Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque

Secretary, Food Division, Mr. Barun Dev Mitra

Honorable FAO Representative in Bangladesh Mr. Dominique Burgeon

EU Charge d'affaires and Head of Cooperation Mr. Milko van Gool

Distinguished guests from FAO/Rome, Bangkok, many other Government of Bangladesh officials, and so many other distinguished participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

Asalaam malaikum and good morning

Food ...

Food security ...

Food for all ...

Late last year, the population of the world passed 7 billion.

Within my lifetime, the world's population will surge past 9 billion ... these people must eat ...

It is in the interests of America and, indeed, of the entire world that all these people have food to eat ... adequate food, nutritious food, healthy diets ... so no one need know the horrid pangs of hunger, so no one need witness her child suffer or die.

Food ... the very essence of life ... is easy to talk about, easy to pontificate about, but not so easy to do something about.

Bangladesh has chosen to do something about the challenge of food, adequate food, nutritious food for all its people.

Minister Razzaque and his team, the Ministry of Agriculture, and many other elements of the Bangladesh government are leading the way.

And Bangladesh's partners and friends, including the EU, the FAO and America, are supporting Bangladesh in its campaign to ensure adequate, nutritious food for all.

Bangladesh is a focus country for President Obama's ambitious Feed the Future program, which endeavors to increase food production, bolster people's access to food, and improve food nutrition. In 2011 alone, America provided almost \$90 million for food security programs and social safety net programs ... all in support of Bangladesh's Country Investment Plan for Agriculture and Nutrition.

... and Bangladesh is making important progress in ensuring food security. The nation's poverty rate fell from 40% to 31.5% from 2005 to 2010. Bangladesh this year has become self sufficient in rice production. Child under-nutrition and stunting rates have begun to decline.

I applaud Bangladesh for this important progress.

Bangladesh, however, is not content with this progress ... it will not be satisfied until all Bangladeshis are healthy and strong with reliable access to ample, safe and nutritious food. And Bangladesh will not be satisfied until no child is under-nourished or stunted

Bangladesh seeks to diversify agricultural production beyond rice so diets are complete, making available needed protein, vitamins and minerals. Bangladesh seeks to enhance incomes so people have the financial means to acquire needed food. Bangladesh seeks to improve nutrition so available food is utilized in ways to ensure maximum nutrition, especially for children and women.

These are lofty goals ... talking about them is one thing; achieving them is something else.

... and that is what this workshop is all about.

Good, effective food security policies do not just happen; they are made to happen. The National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Program, sponsor of today's workshop, is a wondrous collaboration of expertise and resources of the Bangladesh Government, FAO, the EU and the United States.

The National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Program is pivotal to Bangladesh's success in ensuring food for all. The Program helps the Government monitor implementation of the National Food Policy Plan of Action and the Country Investment Plan. The Program helps ensure that all food security initiatives are equitable, gender-sensitive, and effective in reducing poverty and under-nutrition. The Program supports strong links between the policy makers/policy implementers and researchers in academia and civil society.

Over the next two days this workshop will benefit from the presentation of interim results from 14 ongoing research projects covering critical issues such as agricultural inputs, value chains, social safety net programs, among others.

The research activities that will be discussed in this workshop can help the Government of Bangladesh make informed, effective decisions to best address the nation's food and nutrition security challenges.

You, the participants in this workshop, will work hard today and tomorrow to assess and analyze these research results so the Government can evaluate and, as appropriate, refocus and redirect its policies to bring maximum food security to the people.

As for me, I am proud that America joins the EU, the FAO and other friends and partners – through the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Program – in supporting the Government of Bangladesh in achieving its goals of ensuring adequate, nutritious food for all.

I wish you every success in this exciting workshop ... I hope you are proud of your part in bringing a brighter, healthier future to the wonderful people of this great nation.

Thank you.

(End Text)

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**As prepared for delivery*

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